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# CONFERENCE *connection*

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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

November 15, 2019

## Giving Thanks for Ripples

"Ripples on the Water: Each Drop Makes a Difference." Isn't this a wonderful image? It has been the theme for stewardship in my home church this year (Pleasant Hill Community Church, TN). For four Sundays we have lifted up various ways in which we as individuals and as a community of faith create ripples that extend out into the world.

Have you ever skipped stones on a lake when each time the stone glided over the top, it created ripples - ripples which kept becoming broader and overlapping each other? Now imagine that each local church in the Southeast Conference through its mission and ministry created such ripples. Add to that the ripples created by our ministers who serve as chaplains, pastoral counselors, and other specialized ministries. Add to that each member of our local churches who seeks to witness to the unconditional love of God in their jobs, at home, throughout their community, etc. I think our ripples just created some rough water with all the ripples intersecting. But that is what happens and that is what we are about! Creating ripples!

You are needed to make those ripples now more than ever. Our communities throughout the Southeast Conference (and beyond) need our active presence, our voice, our activism, our encouragement, and our hope - all grounded in the conviction that God is at work to create a world that is welcoming and caring of all people. We are called to lift up our understanding of the kind of world that God envisions. And we are called to follow the way of Jesus to assist God in bringing forth that reality. This Thanksgiving, I am so grateful for who you are and all that you do! So



continue to go and create ripples or even waves, knowing that they make a difference in our witness to an all-loving God.

Blessings, Char Burch

## News from the Conference Office

### From the Generosity Coordinator

In this season of Thanksgiving or Giving Thanks, I am reminded once again that giving is a powerful, selfless act. "Live humbly, no matter how wealthy you become, think positively, no matter how hard life is, GIVE MUCH, EVEN IF YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN LITTLE, and God will supply your every need." God is characterized by love and generosity that can free from fixation from having all the answers and how right we are. When we are preoccupied with being right, you may win arguments and achieve a lot. But the greater gift is being aware that love and generosity are far more important than being right or wrong.



We are grateful for all the ways you have blessed this conference with your time, talents and tenth. Your continued support allows us to continue to serve you and our congregations. Please continue to invite me to your churches so that we can continue on this journey together. My prayer is: "May your love and generosity prevail in our own efforts to continue to right the wrongs through our service and serve all."

Continued blessings,  
Min. Carrole

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### Member In Discernment Retreat is Jan 31 & Feb 1

Save the date! The Member in Discernment Retreat will be held January 31st - February 1st in Atlanta. This year the focus of the retreat will be a Mental Health First Aid training led by Dr. Kathryn Bryan, PhD, MDiv.

"Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and

provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.” For more information visit <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/about/>.

The cost will be \$80 which includes all the materials for the training, as well as dinner Friday and lunch Saturday. More details and registration coming soon.

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## Ordination for Stephanie Milton

You're invited to the ordination of Stephanie Milton on Sunday, November 17 at 3:00 p.m. at First Congregational Church, UCC in Atlanta. Stephanie has been called to serve as the facilitator of the college ministry at First Church, and serves as a chaplain fellow in the VA system in Atlanta. Please join us at 103 Courtland Avenue in Atlanta for this ordination.

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A large graphic with the words "LOGO" and "CONTEST" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. "LOGO" is positioned above "CONTEST". The background is a light gray gradient.

## 2020 Annual Meeting Logo Contest

We are getting excited in the Southeast Conference for our 2020 Annual Meeting in Montgomery Alabama June 19th and 20th with Rev. Traci Blackmon as our Guest. ARE YOU? Here is one way that you can help us get others excited to join us this year to make our Annual Meeting wonderful.

We need you to help us come up with a unique design/logo centered around this year's theme: "Reflecting on Our Past, Focusing on Our Future"

(1 Corinthians 12:12). **The deadline to submit your entry is December 17th, 2019 at midnight.** All submissions must be in JPEG format. [Please upload your entry here.](#)

The Annual Meeting Planning Committee will judge the entries in December and the winner will be announced in January.

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## Annual Meeting Youth Explosion

*by Gloria Liggins,*

Our Annual Meeting will be held at Community Congregational Church in beautiful Montgomery, Alabama, on June 19-20, 2020. Our Keynote Speaker will be Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries for The United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, MO. The planning has begun. Tyler Ung, Circular Congregational Church and myself are co-chair for the youth portion of the Annual Meeting.

This annual meeting will include a Youth Explosion. In this historic city of Montgomery, we want to fill the city with our Youth. We want to make this a time for them to get to know each other and experience the UCC as never before but we need your help. We do not want to just bring them here for a meeting. We want to make this an experience that will waken their spirit, encourage their hearts, empower their gifts and inspire them to make a difference. We would like to receive ideas of sessions and gatherings that interest them. We are asking each congregation to present us with one representative who will gather ideas from your youth and present them to us so that we may bring them to the planning committee. **Please have these names to us as soon as possible.** Please feel free to contact us with questions.

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## Giving Tuesday is December 3

The Tuesday after Thanksgiving has become a day in which people around the globe are encouraged and inspired to give to causes and issues that matter to them. Please consider these two possibilities. Our "Friends of the Conference Fund" of the Southeast Conference is a critical way to support the work of the Southeast Conference, supplementing the giving of our local churches who give through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). As the Conference makes decisions for the future, the Fund will help provide the financial stability that is needed. To donate, go to [secucc.org/donate/](https://secucc.org/donate/).

Another option is the United Church of Christ campaign to raise \$50,000 for Medical debt relief. This goal will erase approximately \$5 million dollars of debt. The UCC is partnering with local churches and UCC conferences to address this critical issue. For more information about what has already been done and to make a donation, go to [www.ucc.org](https://www.ucc.org). May we share our thankfulness by sharing our resources!

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## Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2019. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

### Week of November 18

- Pilgrimage UCC; Marietta, Georgia
- Woody Clark
- Myrtle Johnson
- Heidi Schuler
- Linda White

### Week of November 25

- King's Chapel UCC; Alpine, Georgia
- Ashley Cleere
- Robert Johnson
- James Schwarzlose
- Irvin Whitley

## Churches in Transition

Central Congregational, Atlanta, GA; First Congregational, Birmingham AL; Pilgrimage, Marietta GA; First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Peace Church, Clemson SC

**News from the Wider Church**



## Youth Retreat Registration Open

The Winter Youth Retreat 2020 committee announces a "save the date" of January 17-20, 2020. The presenter this year will be Alicia Crosby. Crosby (she/hers) is a justice educator, activist, and (sometimes reluctant) minister whose work addresses the spiritual, systemic, and interpersonal harm people experience. Nashville-based acoustic-electric duo Ocean Elizabeth will be the featured band. This year's theme "Love Who? Love How?" will study the passage of 1 John 4:11-12.

Registration is now open for the Blowing Rock Conference Center Winter Youth Retreat 2020. Dates this year are January 17th-20th. Participant fee this year will be \$200 a person. The registration deadline is 12/21/2019. [Go to the registration site](#). There are some changes to the paperless registration to help all. [Contact the committee](#) if you need help with anything. There's a leader packet available for download at the top of the [registration page](#).

More info is on the event Facebook page: [facebook.com/brccwyr/](https://facebook.com/brccwyr/)





# ★ THE CHRISTMAS FUND

for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund

## Christmas Fund Ministerial Assistance Program

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world for over 115 years. One of the four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, the Christmas Fund provides UCC congregations and members an opportunity to reach out in compassion to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church and who now find themselves facing worrisome financial needs.

The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards, on behalf of the whole church, passes on this direct support so that these needs may be met and our support may be felt. Through your gifts to the Christmas Fund, you can help ensure that "The Light Shines in the Darkness" for those who have so faithfully served our church.



[Download promotional material](#), including a fun kid's coloring book, on the Pension Board website.

## News from our Local Congregations



unitedchurchofchrist There are so many ways to share God's love! Here are three ways Open Table United Church of Christ is sharing God's Love. Does your church do some of these things, too? Or maybe you have a new ministry! Either way, we'd love to hear about it! Share YOUR story at [3greatloves.org](http://3greatloves.org), our link in bio @unitedchurchofchrist or use hashtag #3GreatLoves

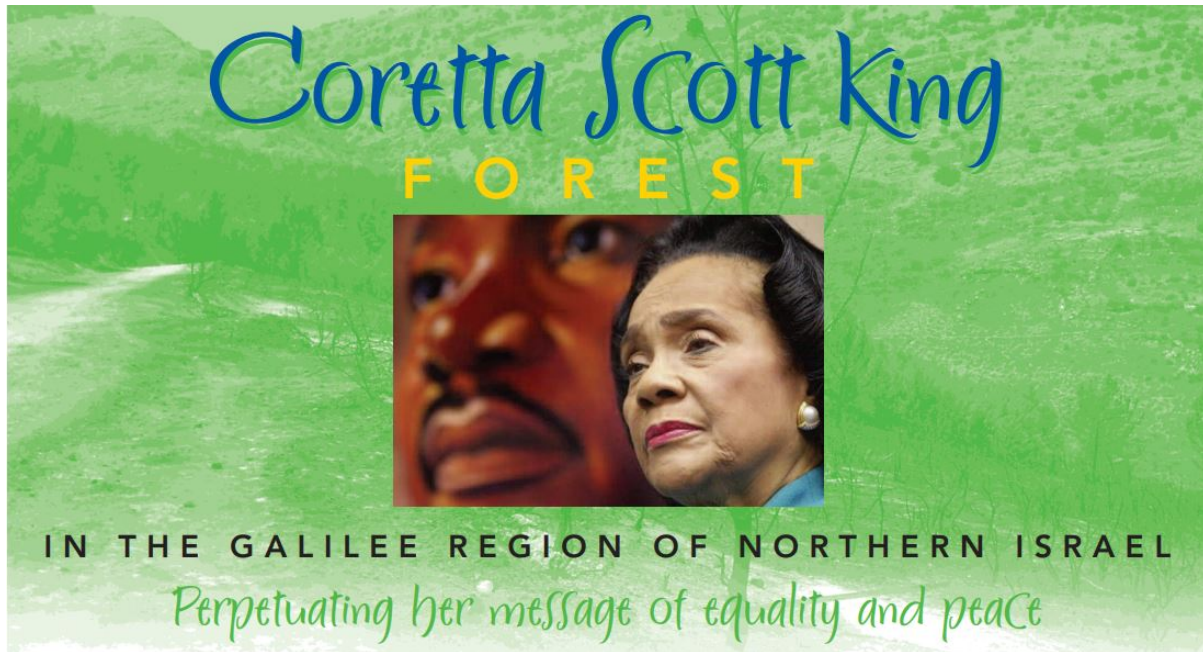
#LoveOfNeighbor #LGBTQ  
#LGBTQMinistries #LGBTQMinistry  
#LGBTQYouth #ImmigrantsWelcome  
#JustWorldForAll #BeTheChurch

14h

## Open Table in Mobile Featured on UCC Social Media

The "Three Great Loves" ministry of the UCC is sharing a story from Open Table UCC in Mobile, AL on the UCC [Instagram](#) and Facebook accounts. This short video features Rhoda Vanderhart, one of their church members, speaking about some awesome ministries they do as a church sharing God's love.

Does your church do some of these things, too? Or maybe you have a new ministry! Either way, the UCC would love to hear about it. Share your story at [3greatloves.org](http://3greatloves.org), or contact national staffer (and former member of the Southeast Conference) Dave Sigmund at [sigmundd@ucc.org](mailto:sigmundd@ucc.org).



## Fairfield Glade Church Receives Gift from Jewish Community

Fairfield Glade Community Church is thankful to the Upper Cumberland Jewish Community for their gift of a tree planted in their honor at the Coretta Scott King Forest. The gift is in celebration of their continued friendship, shared ideals, and support for diversity.

In the summer of 2006, Hezbollah launched Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, destroying two million trees that covered thousands of acres of forest in the Galilee. As a tribute to Coretta Scott King and her message of peace and equality, a section of the Biriya Forest, which was destroyed by the rockets, is being replanted as the Coretta Scott King Forest.

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## Milnes Scholarship Application

The Milnes Fund of Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC, was established in 1996 through a bequest from Jack and Marjory Milnes to provide scholarships for individuals studying to become ministers in the United Church of Christ.

To apply for a scholarship, please submit the following:

1. current *curriculum vita* and
2. cover letter which:
  - a. includes a statement of ministerial philosophy;

- b. outlines future hopes/plans for ministry in the United Church of Christ;
- c. describes financial need; and
- d. provides three references, including one from your pastor.

Award amount may be up to \$3,000. The application should be submitted by December 5, 2019 for the spring semester and should be sent to [Mail@Pilgrim-Church.com](mailto:Mail@Pilgrim-Church.com) in the subject line please put Attn: Milnes Scholarship or via postal mail to Ministry Commission Chair; Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC; 400 Glenwood Drive; Chattanooga, TN 37404; Phone: 423-698-5682. For additional information, you may contact Pilgrim Church.

## Training and Learning Opportunities



### Open and Affirming Webinars

The Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC invites you to the following low-cost webinars:

- ONA and the Bible: Nov. 19, 2019
- ONA 201: Dec. 3, 2019
- Trans/Nonbinary 101: Dec. 5, 2019
- Bisexuality/Pansexuality 101: Dec. 10, 2019

Sign up online at <http://openandaffirming.org/ona-webinars/>.

## Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders (MSTI)

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center is once again offering Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders (MSTI) from March 23-27, 2020. This course is for pastors and other church leaders interested in learning skills to help them deal more effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of group conflict. It will be held at Grace Presbyterian Church in Fort Mill, SC (near Charlotte, NC). Please note that those who register no later than February 21, 2020, will receive a \$200 discount off their tuition. For more information please contact the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center at 630-627-0507 or [admin@LMPeaceCenter.org](mailto:admin@LMPeaceCenter.org). To register online please go to <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4316493>.

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## Back Bay Mission Trip Information Session

Friday, November 22, 2019 at Pleasant Hill Community Church is an opportunity to find out more about the upcoming Nov 8-14, 2020, work camp mission trip to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi MS. The information session is for anyone wanting to know more; if you attend you are not required to make the trip. A first planning session for the trip will take place in January. In February a \$100 deposit per person (towards a total of \$250) will start the mission trip process by meeting together regularly and learning about the guidelines provided by Back Bay Mission.

## Conference Calendar

### Commission on Ministry Retreat

Nov. 15-16, 2019

Beloved UCC, Birmingham, AL

### Ordination of Stephanie Milton

November 17 @ 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST

First Congregational Church, Atlanta, GA

### Council of Conference Ministers

November 19 - November 22

Birmingham, Alabama

### **Staff Meeting**

December 3 @ 9:00 am - 10:30 am EST  
Online Virtual Meeting

### **Annual Meeting Planning Session**

December 9 - November 10  
Community Congregational Church, Birmingham AL

### **Board of Directors Meeting**

January 10, 2020 - January 11, 2020

### **Winter Youth Retreat**

January 17, 2020 - January 20, 2020  
Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock NC

### **MID Retreat**

January 31, 2020 - February 1, 2020  
Atlanta, GA (location TBD)

### **SEC Clergy Retreat**

March 8-10, 2020  
Monteagle, TN

### **SEC Annual Meeting**

June 19-20, 2020  
Montgomery, AL

### **National Youth Event**

July 22-25, 2020  
Purdue University, IN

## **Contact Us**

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Assoc. Conference Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh**; [hbardole@secucc.org](mailto:hbardole@secucc.org)

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